

28 January 1964

MEMO FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Classification of the NIS

1. The Office of Basic Intelligence and the NIS Committee have periodically and exhaustively explored the matter of NIS classification.

2. A particularly thorough review was undertaken when Executive Order 10501 was issued in 1953. That order eliminated the "Restricted" classification which was an appropriate one for the NIS and defined "Confidential" as that information which if revealed to the enemy would be "prejudicial to the defense interests of the nation." After a careful determination of departmental views, the NIS Committee decided upon the "Confidential" as the minimum classification of the NIS with the strong admonishment to avoid any over-classification. The Department of the Army response to the problem, for example, argued that the NIS must be so classified because of the need to protect sources, to control the sub-section "Comments on Principal Sources," avoid infringement of copyright, and ~~the security~~ integrity of the NIS Program. Further, A Department of Defense Directive (5200.1, 8 July 1957) specifically includes intelligence reports in the "Confidential" category.

3. The producers of the NIS, which must be regarded as authoritative national intelligence, have been enjoined to use all sources in the preparation of their NIS sections. The NIS then becomes a compilation reflecting the total scope of available information. Furthermore, this accumulated knowledge is brought together by people who have gone through a selection process and have evaluated the information, whatever the source, on the basis of their entire range of knowledge which is partly based on classified sources. The end result is national intelligence bearing the authoritative imprint of the Central Intelligence Agency.

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